

CANNABIS — OFFENCES

68. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer to recent data released by the Victorian Crime Statistics Agency that suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are far more likely to be arrested for cannabis offences than to receive a caution compared with the rest of the population. Similar figures were published by the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research last year.

- (1) Does the minister have access to data in WA that shows the number of arrests, as opposed to cautions, for cannabis possession, broken down to show the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in each category?
- (2) If he does, are those figures publicly available, will he share them with the house; and, if no to either, why not?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question and answer on behalf of the minister representing. The WA Police Force advise the following.

- (1)–(2) No. The offence for possession of prohibited drugs under section 6(2) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1981 does not specify the particular drug type on the police incident management system. Therefore, determining the number of charges when the prohibited drug is cannabis would require manual data interrogation and would be extremely resource intensive.